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action", preferring to leave the people to govern themselves which they do very well, and which is all they ask.

Even in cases where the crime is in no sense a family matter the action of the law is reluctant and the possibilities of compromise infinite. During my residence in Ta Li a case of robbery with some violence occurred, which illuminates the attitude to crime on the part of people and officials alike. A young man of good family and education, impelled by some romantic or neurotic impulse, committed a series of burglaries, not because he was poor and needed money, for the objects he stole were of little worth. On the last occasion he was surprised in the room of the house he was robbing, and discovered. In the struggle that followed he stabbed the householder in the leg with a small penknife, inflicting a painful but not fatal or dangerous wound. He was overpowered by others in the house and the police summoned. The case being clear, he was carried off to the magistrate's gaol and held there while preliminary enquiries were made—enquiries which dragged on from month to month. There seemed no reason why the trial should be so delayed, since the facts were hardly in dispute.

Meanwhile his relatives, related as they were to every one of influence in the town, began negotiations for a compromise. By circuitous channels, through a relative who knew a friend, who had a friend who knew the victim of the robbery and assault, a proposition was at length put forward. If the victim would agree to forgo prosecution, various men of substance would be found to guarantee the criminal's future behaviour. The officials were perfectly aware of all this and eager to promote the compromise. At last it was agreed that if the criminal could find six men to guarantee his behaviour, who would also undertake to provide him with some means of livelihood, since his reputation and his occupation were equally lost, the victim would write to the

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696 627 magistrate a formal disclaimer of any desire to prosecute. When this had been arranged the case was reviewed by the magistrate and the prisoner released. His friends then obtained a commission in the army for him and he left the town to take part in the war with Japan.

In this case the initial step had been to have the case listed as an ordinary criminal one, not robbery under arms. Had the use of a penknife been held to be robbery under arms the case would have gone before the Military Court, and the penalty might well have been summary execution. Fortunately for the offender it was held that he had not intended to commit violence and that his weapon was not sufficiently dangerous to be considered "arms" in this sense. The attitude of the authorities in this case well illustrates the reluctance which they feel in allowing the law to take its normal course, and the general willingness of all parties to find a way out, to save face, and avoid extreme measures. Here too the factors of family influence, the ramifications of relationship in a small town, and the solidarity of the educated class towards one of its members threatened with a degrading punishment, all played a large part in effecting the compromise.

696 722 627 In sharp contrast to the hesitations of the civil authorities in applying the machinery of the law, the military are ruthless in the suppression of banditry, and this severity is also socially sanctioned, just as the leniency of the civil power is generally approved. In the Min Chia language the name of thief or bandit is classified grammatically with the lower animals, a fact not without significance. In past years the military were far from active in their duty of bandit suppression. This situation which had made travel in Yunnan almost a military operation in the 'twenties, has in recent years been remedied. Under the energetic inspiration of the present Governor, General Lung Yun, banditry has been

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stamped out, except in the outlying border regions of the north, where Tibetan tribesmen descend to raid the roads. The work of bandit suppression is undertaken by the army and to some extent by the militia, an organisation for local defence.

The army in Yunnan, officially listed as one of the army corps of the Republic of China, is in fact a local force, commanded by the Governor and officered by Yunnanese appointed by him. Officers of high rank do not serve in their own districts, just as magistrates are not appointed in their own part of the country, but both classes of officials are drawn from the wealthier landowning families and are thus often related to one another. The men are recruited in times of peace by voluntary enlistment, but since the war began, by a system of drafting, by which a family with more than three adult sons could be called on to supply two recruits, a family with two or three adult sons one recruit, and families with one adult son were exempt. Garrisons are established at the larger centres with smaller detachments in each *hsien* city, or at certain strategic points. Ta Li is the Headquarters of a Divisional Command, specially charged with the duty of clearing bandits from the main trade routes to Burma and to the tea district from Tibet. This duty has been performed so thoroughly that from the year 1936 onwards, in spite of the departure of the original garrison for the war front, banditry has disappeared, and one may travel the roads in safety unescorted. It is easy to understand that in a country of lofty wooded mountains with wide stretches of uninhabited forest between the towns the suppression of banditry was not an easy task, and perhaps ruthless methods were inevitable. Arms were licensed, and those found carrying firearms on the roads without a licence were presumed to be bandits, apprehended and executed. There were in fact only a few actual bands, numbering thirty or more men living as out-